

SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS BY THE NEW YORK STATE INSTITUTE OF PA



Official
Tests
on this
Poor
Monkey



THE life of a monkey is being sacrificed to aid in solving the great question whether alcohol is a poison or not. The experiment proceeds with the authority and at the expense of the State of New York. It is conducted by Dr. Ira Van Gieson, the director of the Pathological Institute of the New York State Hospitals. The doomed monkey is an inmate of the animal-house of this institution where many interesting and valuable experiments take place. The law is very chary of giving power to scientific institutions to perform experiments on living animals, and the standing of the Pathological Institute is a guarantee that any experiment carried on there is justified by the interests of humanity, and is likely to have a valuable scientific result.

The monkey is receiving daily doses of alcohol in such quantities that he will within a very limited time—perhaps a month—become a helpless demented. In colloquial language the monkey is drinking himself to death. But he will not be permitted to die of alcoholism. To do that would be to make him linger in useless suffering for perhaps a long time. When it is perceived that the degeneration of his mental and physical powers from alcohol is complete he will be killed. An autopsy will immediately be performed on the body, with a view to ascertaining the effects of the alcohol on the various organs, and especially on the brain.

This, in fact, is the great object for which the monkey is being prepared—that his dead body may exhibit to man the exact process by which alcohol wrecks a physical organization closely resembling his own.

The animal, it may here be stated, is a member of the spider-monkey family, peculiar to, and very numerous in the New World. He is a native of Panama, and is about two years old. He was brought here six months ago, when the alcoholic experiment was begun on him. The name Jocko has been given to him. He is a pretty, playful, intelligent little fellow, with a long prehensile tail, which serves him as a fifth hand. The American monkeys have not the disagreeable characteristics of most of the Old World monkeys, although they do not stand very high in the scale of evolution.

There were many excellent reasons for making a monkey the subject of such an experiment. The chief one is that his physical structure so closely resembles that of man that the effect of a substance taken into the system of one must be nearly the same in the other. The monkey, moreover, is intelligent. Perhaps from the point of view of mental effects, a dog would have served the purpose better, because he is so obedient to the will of man and the workings of his sense are so thoroughly understood. The value, however, of the mental processes of a man and a dog is doubtful, while regarding the physical processes of a man and a monkey is

conflict wages in the medical world on the subject of every man taking a different standpoint. Opinion among men who says that alcohol is an integral part of the human body and a food, to the man who says that in itself, it is simply a poison to the human organism. There is a fierce opponent of alcohol. He calls it a rank specialist in brain diseases, and takes a deep interest because he believes that to alcohol directly and also indirectly, humanity owes a great part of the fearful brain let it.

Alcohol have grown very strong of late. They have proved the following charges against it: it temporarily arrests the heart's action, producing a sub- with a loss of heat and vitality. That it retards the action of the digestive system, by direct chemical action, the stomach. That it ultimately injures the brain and dis- as system, and greatly reduces the power to work tally.

questions a light will be thrown by the death of soon promises, as his signed statement given to indicates, that the autopsy on Jocko will reveal action in the very cells of his brain as well as in his body.

for six months, been progressing in the path of leads to death. His condition appears pitiable to a doctor of science. Though intelligent, he little a humble instrument through which mankind is at he is a terrible scientific example of the col and the end of the drunkard.

The natural fondness for alcohol which Jocko exhibited has been of great assistance to science. In this respect he resembles most monkeys. He now takes in undiluted and undisguised form all the alcohol he is capable of absorbing. It is quite unnecessary to resort to the subterfuge of concealing it in his food.

Jocko is only happy when he is in a certain passing stage of drunkenness. When he is quite sober he is shivering, doddering, nerve-racked.

A few days ago a Sunday Journal representative had an excellent opportunity of witnessing the experiment of which Jocko is the subject. He saw the unhappy monkey go through every stage of a fearful alcoholic debauch.

On this particular morning the sun poured through the windows of his room. His spirits began to revive and the dullness left his eyes for the time. The presence of a visitor in his apartments seemed to fill him with suspicion, and his glance was furtive and sid- wise. At times, a frenzy of rage in his breast and in that quarrel-

some way, common to heavy drinkers, he showed by his manner that he resented intrusion on his private life.

At intervals his small eyes blazed, and a queer, shrill note of alarm escaped from between his teeth. After a little while he became accus- tomed to the odd man, and chattered to his keeper in a coaxing sort of way, which was understood to be a request for a morning eye-opener.

Knowing what to expect, the keeper had, soaked several lumps of sugar in some strong whiskey, the odor of which had quite a powerful influence on the monkey. After dancing from side to side in his cage he finally came to the door and thrust his long, skinny arms through the bars, beckoning and chattering in tones that were unmistakably pleading. There was hardly any doubt about it—Jocko wanted a dram.

The door was opened, and in an instant he was out, scampered across the floor and perched himself on the table, where, after curling his tail up under him, he held out his black, half human hand and received the first lump. It passed into his somewhat spacious jaws and was crushed in a bite. The whiskey oozed from the sugar crystals, and, with a gulp,

DR. VAN GIESON TELLS WHY HE IS KILLING A MONKEY WITH ALCOHOL.

IN my experiments on the monkey I hope to show how alcohol destroys the resisting power of the body against disease, and in order to go as deeply into the matter as I desire I am obliged to resort to the animal. I am driven to that extremity by the narrowness of the public mind, which is not able to understand the demands made in the interests of science.

What might seem gruesome to the layman would be a perfectly rational and requisite step to scientific men, and the living would profit by the results. But it is difficult to get conditions such as I will require, and I therefore propose to make the conditions to suit myself, and then do with the monkey what I see fit, and purely in the interests of scientific research. Any temperament, or stage of drunkenness or delirium tremens that I require can be produced in time in the simian, which fully explains his association with the experiments.

Alcohol is nothing more nor less than one of the rankest poisons taken into the human system, and de- stroys the cells of the brain, together with its working units or vital principles. The fluids surrounding the cells become charged with alcohol, and impregnate the working units until they are completely destroyed. There are stages where these cells can be restored, and one thing I want to know is just what they will stand. On the other hand, if whiskey must be drunk, there must be some lapse of time for the nerves to recover from the shock. That is important in the investigation.

Alcohol taken as a stimulant is a false theory, as there can be no new energy taken into the body. There is no such thing as new energy that can be utilized at will. Alcohol destroys, poisons, and the end is death. If an alcoholic patient is sunstruck, we are almost positive that he will die as a result, owing to the fact that he has weakened the resistance of his body against the shock.

When the monkey has reached the right stage I will take charge of him; get his brain, his hands, and all parts of the body that have suffered through his intemperance, and get instant results that heretofore have been out of reach. If men knew that poisonous results arise from drinking there would be less intoxication and a vastly improved order of people.

IRA VAN GIESON.

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